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Ministry of Advanced Education

POST-SECONDARY SCHOOLS TAP INTO GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

VICTORIA – British Columbia's post-secondary institutions will have access to a vast geographical database, thanks to a memorandum of understanding with the Integrated Cadastral Information Society (ICIS), the Integrated Land Management Bureau (ILMB) and the Ministry of Advanced Education.

"The Ministry of Advanced Education is excited about entering this agreement because it opens up new opportunities for universities and colleges to research issues that are important to British Columbians," said Advanced Education Minister Murray Coell. "The advantages will be far-reaching in a variety of disciplines – from environmental science, to computer science, to urban planning – and will benefit society as a whole."

Information in this live up-to-the-minute database includes resource allocation, local government, utility infrastructure, emergency services, First Nations territory, plus water, land and energy distribution and use.

Potential applications are limitless and could include animation of changing tree species showing the result of climate change or a working simulation in the case of an environmental or health disaster. Government can potentially save millions of dollars by building infrastructures identified by researchers through the modeling of B.C. road networks, traffic patterns and population projections.

"This is just one of the many ways in which ILMB is leading the way when it comes to opening up access to valuable integrated land and resource information," said Agriculture and Lands Minister and Minister responsible for ILMB Pat Bell. "In the hands of some of the brightest, up and coming scholars in B.C., this important data will undoubtedly help shape the future of our province."

"Access for students, teachers and researchers to this remarkable repository will advance our understanding of British Columbia's considerable natural and infrastructure assets, and it will greatly extend our abilities to use them wisely," said University of British Columbia president Stephen Toope.

The database has been developed over the last two decades and, because of new online technologies, post-secondary institutions will have easy, convenient, and unlimited access to the data.

"This is a significant agreement that reflects the maturation of the society and its expanding membership," said ICIS president Dan Shannon of TELUS. "This is another great example of how our members' spatial data is being shared for the benefit of British Columbians."

The database is currently run by ILMB, a Ministry of Agriculture and Lands agency, with participation from ICIS. ICIS is a partnership of British Columbia's major utilities, provincial government ministries, crown corporations and over 150 local governments with a common goal of sharing spatial data.

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The MOU is part of government's overall strategy to invest in research and development for post-secondary institutions and to build a sustainable environment and provide safe, healthy communities within British Columbia.

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